

DRED SCOTT CHRONOLOGY

- 1638 George Blow emigrates to Virginia from England as an indentured servant and later establishes many generations of Blow Family cotton plantations worked by slaves.
- 1776 Thomas Jefferson pens the “self-evident” truth in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal.”
- 1787 Despite efforts of Madison and Jefferson to prohibit slavery, they recognize the southern states won’t join the Union and so Congress adopts U.S. Constitution, leaving the slave issue to be solved by a future leader.
- 1799 A baby slave boy is born on the Peter Blow’s “Olde Place” Plantation and is named Samuel by his proud mother Hannah.
- 1805 The Louisiana Purchase by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison opens up millions of acres to westward expansion.
- 1809 Abraham Lincoln is born in Kentucky.
- 1813 During the War of 1812, the British attack Norfolk, Virginia and Capt. Peter Blow leads a militia, including his teen slave Sam, to fight in the Battle of Craney Island.
- 1816 Abraham Lincoln moves with his family across the Ohio River and grows up in Indiana.
- 1819 The Peter Blow family joins an out-migration to the Great Bend of the Tennessee River and clears land in Huntsville, Alabama for a new plantation. Sam changes his name to Dred in honor of his brother who is killed while pulling tree stumps and buries him in a slave cemetery.
- 1820 Congress passes the Missouri Compromise which admits Missouri and Maine as slave and free states respectively. No other territories above the 38th Parallel (southern border of MO) can enter the Union as slave states.
- 1828 At 19 Abraham Lincoln takes a flat boat of goods down the Ohio and Mississippi and witnesses a slave auction in New Orleans. He later says, “Slavery ran an iron into me then and there,” and he vowed that “if ever I get a chance to hit [slavery], I’ll hit it hard!”
- 1830 The Blow plantation in Huntsville fails and after successfully running a small hotel in Florence, Alabama, the family migrates to St. Louis, Missouri, joining tens of thousands of Americans heading west.
- 1832 Dred marries (“jumps the broom”) for the first time, but his wife is soon sold away from him. A short time later, Dred’s master dies and his children are forced to sell Dred to pay off the family debts.
- 1833 Dred’s new master, Army surgeon Dr. John Emerson, takes him as his slave orderly to the military post Fort Armstrong on Rock Island in the Mississippi River in the free state of Illinois. While there, Dred takes upon himself the last name “Scott” after the larger-than-life military hero General Winfield Scott.
- 1836 Dr. Emerson is transferred far to the northern frontier garrison Fort Snelling in free Wisconsin Territory (present day Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

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- 1837 Dred is married by Fort Snelling Commander Lawrence Taliaferro to his slave Harriet Robinson, who he gifts to Dr. Emerson so that Dred and Harriet can remain together as husband and wife.
- 1838 Dred and Harriet's first daughter Eliza is born on the steamboat "Gypsy" while traveling on the Mississippi River.
- 1846 The Scotts' second daughter Lizzie is born at Fort Jefferson in the slave state of Missouri and Dred begins to seek their freedom with the help of the grown Blow children. They still love Dred, who they see as a man and consider their older brother. Dr. Emerson dies and leaves the Scott family to his wife Irene who then asks her brother John Sanford to help her manager her property including her slaves.
- 1847 Despite Missouri law that has held "once free - always free," the courts rule for Irene Emerson and the Scotts remain in slavery, but prepare for a new trial.
- 1850 After much preparation and waiting, a jury of twelve white men find Dred, Harriet and the girls to be free! Irene Emerson moves away and leaves all matters in her brother's hands who, having married into the largest and most powerful slave owning family in Missouri, continues the fight and appeals the court's decision.
- 1852 After a partisan election, two new openly pro-slavery judges on the Missouri Supreme Court reverse decades of legal precedent, declare "times now are not as they were then," and reverse the jury finding and order the Scotts back into the chains of slavery. Sanford later meets up with them and whips them severely, inspiring Dred to try once again to gain freedom - this time in the United States Supreme Court.
- 1856 Arguments begin in the Supreme Court on the now-famous case, *Scott v. Sandford*.
- 1857 Chief Justice Roger Taney reads his infamous decision ruling that the Missouri Compromise is unconstitutional and declares that blacks "being of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race," are not "citizens" as contemplated by the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution; and therefore the Scotts are rightfully the property of white men and have no right to sue for their freedom.
- 1858 Dred Scott dies of tuberculosis not knowing the historic change he has set in motion by his courage and commitment to freedom. However, he dies a free man because Irene Emerson, having remarried a Massachusetts abolitionist and Republican congressman, finally sells Dred, Harriet, Eliza and Lizzie to Taylor Blow, who immediately frees them.
- 1860 Abraham Lincoln, who despises the Dred Scott decision and uses his opposition as a keystone of his campaign, is elected 16th President of the United States.
- 1863 President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation and frees the slaves in the Southern States. In November he begins an address dedicating the cemetery for soldiers killed at Gettysburg by reminding us that our nation was "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." He inspires the people to continue and end the struggle toward a "new birth of freedom."
- 1865 The long national nightmare of Civil War ends at Appomattox Courthouse, VA. Six days later the Great Emancipator, President Abraham Lincoln, is assassinated. On December 6th, the Thirteenth Amendment is ratified, abolishing slavery throughout the entire re-United States
- 1868 The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified and finally overturns the Dred Scott decision and declares all persons born on U.S. soil to be "citizens" of the United States.